

Media Release

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Sheed concerned by confusion over border permits

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed MP is seeking clarity for farmers and agricultural workers in the Greater Shepparton region regarding their eligibility to travel across the Victorian/NSW border.

“I’m disappointed by the current confusion and our local farmers and agricultural workers will be wanting answers,” Ms Sheed said.

“On Tuesday, following an announcement by the NSW government, we were left with the impression permits would be available on a case-by-case basis. Then suddenly yesterday, those from Greater Shepparton and Greater Bendigo had their eligibility cast into doubt.”

Liaising with the Victorian Minister for Agriculture Jaclyn Symes, Ms Sheed has been trying to unravel what the rules are for affected constituents in the Greater Shepparton local government area.

“Since the borders closed my office has fielded many queries and stories of significant hardship. Farmers who cannot access their stock and land across the border in NSW. Farmers who cannot source their regular supplies of feed. Workers who cannot get to their employers’ farms,” Ms Sheed said.

“We have heard accounts of farmers being told to fly their stock and feed to Sydney to get it into NSW.

“While we all recognise the need for movement restrictions to overcome the spread of COVID-19, what is disappointing is the uncertainty many are operating under when the rules of these restrictions are not communicated clearly and effectively.

“To have news at the start of the week that permits will be granted only to be contradicted later in the week is causing unnecessary confusion for those operating in one of our most critical industries.”

Urging anyone affected to contact her office, Ms Sheed said she would fight to have every instance of hardship recognised by the Victorian and NSW state governments.

“Please contact my office if you have been impacted by either the closures or the confusion over permit eligibility. While we cannot guarantee to get you a NSW permit, we can guarantee your issue will be brought to Victorian minister’s office. We can guarantee that those enforcing these rules are aware of the impact they are having and I will fight for changes to be made where necessary.”

ENDS

Media contact

Myles Peterson 0467 035 840 | myles.peterson@suzannasheed.com.au